

Current Class: UNCLASSIFIED  
Current Handling: n/a

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UNCLASSIFIED PTQ5760

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 01033 01 OF 02 172028Z RELEASED IN FULL  
ACTION IIP-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	WHA-00	EAP-00	UTED-00	VC-00	TEDE-00
	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	OIC-02
	ACE-00	SS-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	DRL-02	SAS-00	/007W
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R 172012Z APR 02  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6786  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 SANTIAGO 001033

STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PD, INR/IAA  
AMEMBASSY FOR PAO, IO

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, KPAO, CI  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: VENEZUELA

1. SUMMARY: APRIL 17 SANTIAGO DAILIES PUBLISHED ONLY TWO OPINION PIECES THAT MAKE REFERENCE TO THE ROLE OF THE U.S. IN THE VENEZUELAN CRISIS. LEADING SANTIAGO DAILY LA TERCERA RAN AN EDITORIAL THAT FOCUSES PRIMARILY ON THE OVERALL CONFUSION IN THAT COUNTRY BUT THAT DOES MAKE REFERENCE TO WASHINGTON AS THE HEAD OF THE INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION TO CHAVEZ. GOVERNMENT-OWNED, EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT LA NACION RAN AN OP-ED PIECE BY REGULAR COLUMNIST MANUEL GARCES, WHICH SAYS THAT IT IS NOT SIGNIFICANT WHETHER THE U.S. WAS DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE  
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COUP SINCE THERE ARE MANY OTHER WAYS BY WHICH SUPERPOWERS TEND TO SHOW THEIR DISPLEASURE WITH A PARTICULAR LEADER. TODAY'S DAILIES ALSO RAN WIRE STORIES ON THE WHITE HOUSE'S STATEMENT IN ANSWER TO THE NEW YORK TIMES ARTICLE THAT U.S. GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAD MET WITH VENEZUELA'S OPPOSITION LEADERS. EXCEPT FOR SENSATIONALIST, POPULAR DAILY LA CUARTA (WHICH HEADLINED ITS ARTICLE "GRINGOS WASH THEIR HANDS OF THE COUP IN VENEZUELA") AND A LA TERCERA ARTICLE (WHICH WAS ENTITLED "U.S KNEW ABOUT COUP TO OUST HUGO CHAVEZ"), THE REMAINING HEADLINES UNDERScored WASHINGTON'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF MEETINGS WITH OPPOSITION LEADERS AND ITS OBJECTION TO EITHER ENDORSING OR TAKING PART IN THE COUP. LOCAL ARTICLES CONTINUED TO STRESS THE GOVERNMENT'S MISHANDLING OF THE CRISIS. BLOCK

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
REVIEW AUTHORITY: JOHN L MILLS  
DATE/CASE ID: 30 AUG 2004 200400110

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QUOTES FOLLOW. END SUMMARY.

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EDITORIAL AND OPED  
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2. LEADING-CIRCULATION, POPULAR, INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO DAILY LA TERCERA ON APRIL 17 RAN AN EDITORIAL ENTITLED "VENEZUELA AT THE CROSSROADS." BLOCK QUOTE FOLLOWS.

"... IT'S STILL TOO SOON TO FIND SOME LOGIC TO THE EVENTS... A SELF-PROMOTED COUP HAS NOT BEEN TOTALLY RULED OUT BY VENEZUELAN... BUT EVEN IF THIS ISN'T THE CASE, THERE ARE STILL MANY QUESTIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, WHAT ROLE DID WASHINGTON PLAY? ... CHAVEZ REPRESENTS THE ENORMOUS SOCIAL DIVISION IN THAT COUNTRY... THE IMAGES OF POLICE REPRESSION AND OF CLOSED TELEVISION STATIONS ARE STILL  
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FRESH IN THE MINDS OF VENEZUELAN. HIS POPULISM, HIS ATTACKS ON MANY SOCIAL SECTORS, AND HIS SYMPATHY WITH COLOMBIA'S GUERRILLA ARE TOO FRESH... IN ADDITION, THERE IS THE GROWING INTERNATIONAL OPPOSITION, HEADED BY WASHINGTON, WHICH IS CONCERNED OVER CHAVEZ' CLOSENESS TO CASTRO AND HUSSEIN. CHAVEZ MUST TRY TO CLEAN HIS IMAGE FIRST ... AND PUT HIS COUNTRY BACK ON THE INSTITUTIONAL PATH. HE MUST ALSO BEGIN TO COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING WITH THOSE SECTORS HE DISAVOWED OR ATTACKED IN THE PAST. THAT'S THE LESSON TO BE LEARNED."

3. GOVERNMENT-OWNED, EDITORIALY INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO DAILY LA NACION RAN AN OP-ED PIECE ON APRIL 17 BY JOURNALIST MARCEL GARCES THAT SAYS:

"... THIS ISN'T ABOUT ACCUSING THE WHITE HOUSE OF DIRECTLY INTERVENING IN THE PREPARATION OF THE COUP, BUT IT'S A REMINDER THAT IT GAVE MANY SIGNALS OF DISAPPROVAL OR OPPOSITION TO CHAVEZ. AT THE END OF LAST YEAR, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION LEFT VENEZUELA OUT OF ITS TRADE PREFERENCES AND NOTIFIED IT THAT, UNLESS IT CHANGED ITS POSITION ON THE U.S. CAMPAIGN ON TERRORISM, IT WOULD LOSE ITS SHARE OF THE OIL MARKET... THE U.S. WAS ALSO IRKED OVER CHAVEZ' CLOSENESS TO FIDEL CASTRO ... AND OVER VENEZUELA'S POSITION ON THE CONFLICT IN COLOMBIA. SO, UNCLE SAM POINTED HIS FINGER AT CHAVEZ. IT DIDN'T PUT HIM ON THE LIST OF ITS ENEMIES... BUT PUT HIM ON THE LIST OF THOSE WHO ARE A NUISANCE... AND WE ALL KNOW HOW THE BIG GUYS SOMETIMES EXPRESS THEIR BAD HUMOR."

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WIRE STORY HEADLINES  
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4.    SANTIAGO FINANCIAL DAILY EL DIARIO, APRIL 17:  
      "UNITED STATES DENIES SUPPORTING COUP IN VENEZUELA."
5.    CONSERVATIVE, AFTERNOON SANTIAGO DAILY LA SEGUNDA,  
      APRIL 16: "U.S. DENIES SUPPORT OF COUP IN VENEZUELA."
6.    LA TERCERA, APRIL 17: "U.S. KNEW ABOUT COUP TO OUST  
      HUGO CHAVEZ."
7.    CONSERVATIVE, INDEPENDENT SANTIAGO DAILY EL  
      METROPOLITANO, APRIL 17: "IMPROPER RELATIONS."
8.    LA NACION, APRIL 17: "WHITE HOUSE DENIES SUPPORTING  
      THOSE IN FAVOR OF A COUP."
9.    LA CUARTA, APRIL 17: "GRINGOS WASH THEIR HANDS OF  
      THE COUP IN VENEZUELA."

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	INR-00	IO-00	LAB-01	VCE-00	AC-01	OIC-02	PER-00
	ACE-00	IRM-00	SS-00	TEST-00	USIE-00	DRL-02	SAS-00

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R 172012Z APR 02  
FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6787  
AMEMBASSY CARACAS

UNCLAS SECTION 02 OF 02 SANTIAGO 001033

STATE FOR IIP/G/WHA, INR/R/MR, WHA/BSC, WHA/PD, INR/IAA  
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LOCAL PRESS COVERAGE  
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10. EL MERCURIO, APRIL 17: "PRESIDENT RICARDO LAGOS DISCUSSED WITH HUGO CHAVEZ (ON THE TELEPHONE) STEPS TAKEN BY THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT TO REESTABLISH DIALOGUE IN HIS COUNTRY."

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11. LA NACION, APRIL 17: "THE GOVERNMENT VOICED ITS DISCONTENT OVER STATEMENTS MADE BY VENEZUELA'S AMBASSADOR IN CHILE SUPPORTING PEDRO CARMONA'S DE FACTO GOVERNMENT, WHEN HE HAD NOT BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE GOVERNMENT OF CHILE."

12. LA NACION, APRIL 17, QUOTES VENEZUELAN POLITICAL ANALYSTS JUDITH LEON AND MANUEL CABELLOS: "CHAVEZ WILL LAUNCH AN APPEASEMENT STRATEGY WITH THE UNITED STATES, SINCE THAT COUNTRY IS VENEZUELA'S MOST IMPORTANT TRADING PARTNER AND STRATEGICALLY THE CLOSEST AND MOST TRUSTWORTHY MARKET FOR ITS MOST IMPORTANT RESOURCE: OIL."

13. EL MOSTRADOR, APRIL 17: "A (VENEZUELAN) AMBASSADOR WHO WAS TOO QUICK TO NOTE THE 'THE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH CHILE' ... WITH THE PROVISIONAL PRESIDENT, AND AN OFFICIAL (CHILEAN) STATEMENT BLAMING CHAVEZ FOR THE CRISIS ARE PART OF CHILE'S MURKY POSITION ON THE RECENT EVENTS IN VENEZUELA."

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